

REMARKS

The courtesy of Examiner Taylor Victor Oh in conducting a telephone interview with the undersigned on 7 February 2007 is acknowledged with appreciation. A statement of the substance of the interview follows.

In the interview, Applicants' undersigned representative discussed with the Examiner the allowability of the claims in view of the recitations in the independent claims that require that the protonated cation exchanger be regenerated by using an acid or an acidic salt. In response to the Examiner's contention that the primary reference, Powell, teaches that an acid can be used for regeneration, Applicants pointed the Examiner to the description in Powell at column 3, lines 30-34 that teaches that it is **essential** to wash the resin with an aqueous solution of strong alkali in order for successful regeneration. Applicants suggested the introduction into claim 37 of a recitation that would exclude such alkali treatment as part of the regeneration process. The Examiner indicated that this amendment to the claims might result in allowance, as noted in the Interview Summary which issued from the interview.

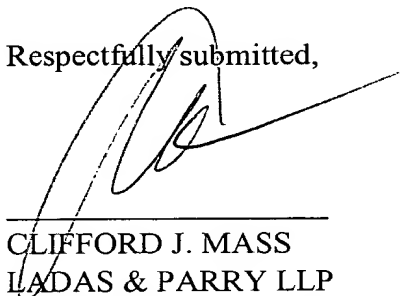
Applicants have now amended claim 37 with the use of the "consisting of" transitional to restrict the regenerant for treating the protonated cation exchanger to an acid or acidic salt solution. Support for this recitation appears in the specification as filed at, for example, page 7, first full paragraph.

Claim 37 as amended and the claims depending therefrom patentably distinguish from

the cited art for the reasons discussed above. Claim 40 and the claims depending therefrom patentably distinguish from the cited art because the cited art does not show or suggest effecting the recited regeneration by contacting a cation exchanger with an acidic salt of a di- or triprotic acid.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request an early and favorable reconsideration of the application as amended.

Respectfully submitted,



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